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## A welter of spies

**N**OWHERE else in the world is it so easy to move spies back and forth across the iron curtain as in Germany.

There is a massive flow of traffic of all kinds between the two parts of divided Germany.

East Germany is crisscrossed by special "transit" auto routes used by West Germans going through East Germany. Permits for West Germans to use such "transit" routes is easy.

A constant flow of Western vehicles passes over these routes. A West German vehicle is not supposed to stop in passage, except at a fuel station. But there can always be an emergency stop. Nothing could be easier than for one person to slip from, and another into, a passing car.

Any East German who can get into West Germany — is immediately, by law, treated as a West German citizen and given a West German passport.

West Germans visit East Germany, by the hundreds of thousands.

So passing spies through the iron curtain in Germany is easy. Germany is the perfect environment for anyone in the spy business.

Add to the ease of moving spies around the fact that East and West Germany share an enormous interest in what is going on in the other part of their divided country.

Pause for a moment and consider what is the most startling and radical thing that could happen in today's world.

Today's order of the nations is built around the divisions of Germany. It is the central feature of the results of World War II. It means that the Soviet Union is flanked on its western border by a divided, hobbled, hence virtually neutralized Germany rather than by a Germany capable of invading Russia, as Russia was invaded by Germany twice in recent history — by the Kaiser in 1914 and Hitler in 1941. (Also, Russia was invaded from Germany with large German contingents in the invading armies by Charles XII of Sweden in 1709 and by Napoleon in 1812.)

Russia would love to have Germany reunited, under Moscow's control. The West would like to have Germany reunited, in alliance with the West. But in Moscow a divided Germany is preferable to one truly independent or allied with the West. The same is true in reverse for the West. A divided Germany is preferable to a united Germany tied to Russia. Indeed, to many Europeans the present condition of a divided Germany is preferable even to a truly independent united Germany.

West Germany is the most populous country in Western Europe today with a population of 62 million. Italy has 57 million, Britain has 56 million, and France 54 million. A reunited Germany would have 78 million people, and again be of more than average European size. The other Europeans feel comfortable with a Germany of nearly their own size.

Thus all the world is sensitized to any movement in either East or West Germany in a direction that might conceivably lead toward German reunification. Germany is in fact the world's prime target of spy interest.

Small wonder, therefore, that the West German government has just uncovered another nest of East German spies in its midst.

West Germany is now having its third major spy ring exposure. The first big one was in 1974 when Chancellor Willy Brandt's own private office was penetrated. He had to resign. In 1978 Defense Minister Gerhard Leber had to resign over more spy scandals. Spying, both ways, is chronic in Germany.

To Westerners, a surprising feature of the latest spy exposures is probably the fact that some East Germans seem to feel a loyalty to East Germany. In the present case some of the people involved went from East to West Germany years back and simply dedicated themselves to a life of spying for East Germany.

Each case is individual. The most prominent of the current spies is Hans-Joachim Tiedge. He had a record of mounting debt, alcoholism, and generally bad behavior. He could have sold out just for money. Obviously, he should have been suspected and nabbed before he had a chance to escape.

Better anti-spy work is called for in West Germany.